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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 IO-13 HA-05 ACDA-12 TRSE-00
MCE-00 EA-10 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 EB-08 /125 W
----------087993 231357Z /46
P R 231342Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1933
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 16297

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: FR, UR
SUBJECT: FRENCH REACT SHARPLY TO TASS ACCUSATIONS ON SHABA

1. FOREIGN MINISTER DE GUIRINGAUD REACTED WITH INDIGNATION TO ACCUSATIONS MADE BY TASS THAT FRENCH AND BELGIAN TROOPS WERE IMPOSING A "MASSIVE TERROR ON THE LOCAL POPULATION IN SHABA." THE TASS ARTICLE, TITLED "ZAIRE: TERROR AND VIOLENCE BY THE AGRESSEURS," REPORTEDLY ASSERTED THAT THE SITUATION IN SHABA "RECALLED THE WORST EPOCHS OF THE COLONIAL CONQUESTS OF THE AFRICANS BY THE EUROPEAN 'CONQUISTADORES,'" AND NOTED THAT THE FRANCO-BELGIAN "AGRESSION" WAS SUPPORTED BY THE US.

2. GUIRINGAUD IMMEDIATELY INSTRUCTED THE FRENCH
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AMBASSADOR IN MOSCOW TO PROTEST TO THE SOVIETS ABOUT THIS ARTICLE. GUIRINGAUD HIMSELF MADE A SHARP DECLARATION TO THE PRESS MAY 22, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING COMMENT: "THE TASS AGENCY IS MISTAKEN. IT IS ON THE CONTRARY THE KATAGAN REBELS, TRAINED BY THE CUBANS, WHO ARE CARRYING OUT A REIGN OF TERROR. THIS ARTICLE BY THE TASS AGENCY IS SO UNREAL AND SO SCANDALOUS

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THAT I HAVE ASKED MY AMBASSADOR IN MOSCOW TO CARRY OUT IMMEDIATELY A PROTEST DEMARCHE."

3. COMMENT: THIS FRENCH-SOVIET CONTRETEMPS COMES AFTER A PERIOD OF SEVERAL MONTHS OF COOLING FRANCO-SOVIET RELATIONS. THE SOVIETS HAVE FOR SOME TIME BEEN ANNOYED BY GISCARD'S ACTIVIST POLICY IN AFRICA, AND THEY HAVE WARNED THE FRENCH DARKLY ABOUT ARMS SALES TO CHINA. ON THEIR SIDE THE FRENCH HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY CONCERNED ABOUT SOVIET PENETRATION IN AFRICA, WHERE THEY BELIEVE FRANCE HAS A SPECIAL ROLE. THEY WERE UNHAPPY ABOUT THE SOVIET POSITION IN BELGRADE, AND THE ENTIRE POLITICAL SPECTRUM IN FRANCE, INCLUDING THE PCF, IS INDIGNANT ABOUT THE TREATMENT OF ORLOV AND OTHER DISSIDENTS. WITH THIS BACKGROUND IN MIND, QUAI OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN TELLING US RECENTLY THAT THEY FORESEE RATHER COOL BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH MOSCOW IN THE COMING MONTHS. END COMMENT.
HARTMAN

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